United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1327
9 February 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Agreement reached to allow deployment of International Civil Mission in Haiti; group of United Nations human rights experts and technical personnel will travel to Haiti in coming days.

+ Possibility of reaching agreed solutions among three Bosnian sides reduced by refusal of Bosnian Government delegation to meet with other sides or to discuss provincial boundaries, Secretary-General reports to Security Council.

+ Security Council welcomes El Salvador's request for United Nations verification of March 1994 general elections; expresses concern over failure of Government and FMLN to comply fully with peace agreements, urges completion of peace process.

+ Released in Vienna yesterday, 1993 World Social Situation Report says focused government intervention is vital to resolve enormous disparity between world's rich and poor.

+ Chairmen of Anti-Apartheid Committee and Commission against Apartheid in Sports issue joint statement mourning death of Arthur Ashe.

* * *

Agreement has been reached to allow the deployment of an International Civil Mission in Haiti, according to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for that country, Dante Caputo.

In a statement read out at a press conference at Headquarters today, Mr. Caputo said the United Nations component of the Mission would be dispatched to Haiti as soon as a group of human rights experts and technical personnel had reported back on the conditions in the country. That group would leave New York in the coming days.

The statement said the agreement marked the "first effective step towards the global solution of the crisis" and the full restoration of democracy in Haiti, as called for by the General Assembly in a resolution adopted last

(more)

For information media--not an official record

year. The Secretary-General believed that the success and continuity of the Mission depended, in particular, on the determination of the parties to cooperate fully in carrying out the Mission's objectives.

The Secretary-General reaffirmed the United Nations readiness to ensure respect for human rights and an end to violence with a view to establishing the necessary conditions for the full restoration of democracy in Haiti, the statement said.

* * *

The possibility of reaching agreed solutions among the three Bosnian sides had been reduced by the "refusal of the Bosnian Government delegation to meet with the other sides or to discuss provincial boundaries", according to a report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the Security Council, issued yesterday.

The report outlines developments in the new round of peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were held at Headquarters from 3 to 8 February. Negotiations were moved from Geneva to New York by the two Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, in an effort to reach agreement with all three Bosnian parties on a map dividing the country into 10 semi-autonomous provinces.

According to the report, the Bosnian Government took the position that "it was not willing to discuss either the provincial boundaries or interim governmental arrangements". It also declined to meet together with the two other sides.

The Bosnian Serb side, the report stated, continued to maintain that many predominantly Serb areas had been excluded from Serb majority provinces. It continued to take the position that it would accept and sign the map only if the populations of contested areas were consulted. That condition was rejected by the Co-Chairmen on the ground that there had been "so much 'ethnic cleansing' and displacement of population in Bosnia and Herzegovina" that such consultations would not be democratic.

The report recalled that the Bosnian Croat side had already signed the map as well as the proposed constitutional principles.

A revised map with modifications in the proposed provincial boundaries was submitted by the Co-Chairmen in the hope that it might be acceptable to all three Bosnian parties. But it was rejected by the Bosnian Serb side, and the Co-Chairmen remained committed to their original proposal, the report said.

Meanwhile, Cyrus Vance, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on the former Yugoslavia, told the Security Council yesterday that the first and fundamental objective of the peace talks was to stop the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(more)

In a statement delivered during consultations of the Council yesterday evening, Mr. Vance said that he and Lord Owen, the European Community negotiator, were concerned about the danger of the conflict spreading in the Balkan region. They were also committed to stop the criminal practice of "ethnic cleansing" and to reverse its consequences.

Mr. Vance went on to say that he and Lord Owen had also proposed a range of mechanisms for protecting human and minority rights in the future, including the setting up of a constitutional court, a human rights court, four ombudsmen with broad powers of investigation and action, and the establishment of an international commission on human rights for Bosnia and Herzegovina. They had also strongly advocated the establishment of an international criminal court to try persons accused of crimes against humanity.

He emphasized that the Conference had constantly sought to maintain the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign, independent, integral and multi-ethnic state. "We rejected proposals from the outset for Bosnia and Herzegovina to be organized as a confederation with three constituent units -- in effect three states-within-a-state", he said. (Document S/25248)

* * *

The Security Council has welcomed El Salvador's request to the United Nations to verify the general elections scheduled for March 1994. The Secretary-General had forwarded the Salvadoran request in a letter to the Council President, dated 26 January, in which he said the elections would constitute the "logical culmination of the entire peace process".

In a statement read out on behalf of the members by its President, Ahmed Snoussi (Morocco), the Council expressed concern that the Government of El Salvador had yet to comply fully with recommendations concerning the purification of its armed forces. It also expressed concern that the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) had not completed the destruction of its weapons by the agreed deadline and was therefore not yet in full compliance with the Peace Agreements.

Emphasizing the solemn nature of the undertakings made by the parties in the Peace Agreements, the Council strongly urged them to persist in their determination to complete the process of bringing peace and national reconciliation to El Salvador and to continue cooperating with the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure that those Agreements were implemented fully.

The Council welcomed the important progress made thus far in the peace process in El Salvador, emphasizing the formal end to the armed conflict there on 15 December 1992, which had concluded more than 10 years of war.

* * *

(more)

According to the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation, which was released in Vienna yesterday, focused government intervention can be vital to resolving the enormous disparity in physical and material well-being that continues to divide the world's rich and the poor.

The report analyses some major social issues which the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Denmark in 1995, is expected to address. The issues include population growth and migration, hunger, health, education, housing, unemployment, quality of life, income distribution and government expenditure on social services. Furthermore, it examines issues such as economic and social institutions, social security reforms, ethnic conflicts and the social consequences of advances in technology.

Prepared every four years by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development in accordance with the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, the report also underlines the need to target women and other vulnerable groups for specific social assistance.

In addition to a declining world economy, the escalation in ethnic and religious conflicts has played a significant role in destroying conditions essential for socio-economic development, the report says. In 1989-1990, there were 33 armed conflicts worldwide, all but two of which were civil wars. The number of casualties of those conflicts have been very high and the effects severe.

* * *

Arthur Ashe, the American tennis champion who died on 6 February, was, through courage and example, instrumental in exposing and pulling down racial barriers in sports and in society as a whole, according to a joint statement issued today by the Chairmen of the Special Committee against Apartheid and the Commission against Apartheid in Sports. Mr. Ashe was also the Co-Chairman of Athletes and Artists against Apartheid.

The Chairmen, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria) and E. Besley Maycock (Barbados) said Mr. Ashe, an untiring campaigner against the South African apartheid system, had successfully led the campaign to expel South Africa from the Davis Cup. He had given generously of his time and energy to support athletes who had been victims of racial discrimination and had encouraged a new generation to isolate South Africa in sports until apartheid was abolished.

The statement said Mr. Ashe would be "remembered with gratitude" by all those who, like he was, are committed and engaged in defending or restoring human rights and justice everywhere and, in particular, in bringing about an end to apartheid through a new democratic and non-racial society in South Africa.

* *** *